

U.S. Serial No. 10/720,413
Response to Office Action
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REMARKS

The Office Action has been carefully considered, along with the prior art and rejections proffered by the Examiner. In response, applicants hereby request that claims 1-9 and 22 be canceled without prejudice, and with the reserved right to pursue this canceled subject matter by way of a continuation or divisional application having co-pendency with this application or any continuing application.

In addition, applicants have also canceled claim 10 and amended claims 11-13, 15, 17, and 19. New claims 23-26 are also presented to provide a more complete scope of coverage for the present invention.

As the Examiner will note, claim 15 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, and likewise claim 17 has been rewritten in the same manner. Thus, claims depending directly or indirectly from either claim 15 or claim 17 are deemed allowable. Claim 20 is already in independent form, thus claims 20 and 21 are deemed to be allowable over the art of record.

With regard to the listing of references in the specification being treated as an improper Information Disclosure Statement, applicants previously submitted the Information Disclosure Statement filed November 24, 2003 with the application, which notes that all of the documents are recited in the parent application and therefore neither copies nor further explanation were required. Consideration of this prior art and return of the Initialed copy of Form PTO-1449 are acknowledged.

With regard to the priority statement, applicant notes that the Patent Application Transmittal in paragraph 10 requested that the Patent Office amend the specification by inserting the necessary reference. However, applicants have included this amendment here again along with the current status of the parent application.

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All formal and informal matters have been addressed; this application is deemed to be in condition for allowance. Early notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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